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////////// C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- ADDRESSEE ADDED //////////

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SUBJECT: MANDATORY FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE FOR PROVINCIAL
RECONSTRUCTION TEAM (PRT) MEMBERS

¶1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified; handle accordingly. Not for distribution on the Internet.

¶2. (SBU) Summary: This is an action request. Embassy Baghdad requests that State include a mandatory military field training component in the series of training courses currently required for civilians going out to assignments in PRTs. Current Iraq PRT pre-deployment training includes 15 days of predominantly classroom-based training that comprises three mandatory FSI courses: PRT Training (AR-420), Iraq Familiarization (FT-610), and Diplomatic Security Foreign Affairs Counter-threat (OT-610). The field training component includes two voluntary options of different lengths and focus: a nine-day joint PRT-U.S. Army Brigade dynamic field exercise and a five-day military familiarization and PRT Training course culminating exercise. The Embassy requests that NEA/I now make the civil-military field training initiatives a mandatory part of PRT pre-deployment training for career State employees and 3161s going to PRT positions in Iraq. USAID also recognizes the potential value of the additional pre-deployment training for its PRT Representatives, and will consider the option of sending its PRT staff, while taking into consideration the individuals' prior experience, the timing of vacancies, and the cost of the additional training. End summary.

¶3. (SBU) A field-based exercise is needed to complement the classroom-based coursework and offer PRT personnel the opportunity to learn and develop the skills necessary to function effectively from the moment they arrive in Iraq. Team Leaders (TLs) have urged us to institute such training. Most PRT personnel do not have the training or the experience to prepare them for a PRT's intense partnership with and reliance on the military, nor for the special demands of the high-stress, high-ambiguity circumstances they will face in Iraq. As a result, it takes them months on the ground before they become effective. Intense and immersive field training dramatically accelerates this learning curve.

¶4. (SBU) NEA/I has initiated a voluntary nine-day field training exercise to complement current classroom training with a dynamic field exercise. Currently, select members of the PRT (Team Leaders, reporting and public diplomacy officers, program managers, and USAID reps) are approved to attend these exercises at Combat Training Centers (CTCs) in Fort Irwin, CA and Fort Polk, LA, where they train with a U.S. Army brigade slated to deploy to Iraq. NEA/I is also developing a shorter five-day military familiarization and culminating exercise at Camp Atterbury, IN for those who cannot attend a CTC rotation.

¶5. (SBU) During a CTC rotation, trainees enter a simulated Iraqi province and interact with Iraqi officials, tribal and religious leaders, and community groups (all Iraqi role players) in the course of pursuing PRT and brigade objectives. They become familiar with the structure, function and rhythm of a brigade and conduct joint

military-PRT planning and operations, learning to navigate the inherent tensions between a brigade's priorities and time horizon and those of a PRT. The field exercise is completely immersive, intense, and challenging. Participation will dramatically improve the performance and effectiveness of PRT personnel, especially in the first months of their tour.

¶6. (SBU) Recently-arrived PRT leaders who completed the field Q6. (SBU) Recently-arrived PRT leaders who completed the field training endorse it enthusiastically for its realism and for the way it surpasses the "crash and bang" course in preparing civilians for Iraq. Team leaders have urged us to institute such training, noting that it immerses the team member in real life situations -- from meetings with key local officials, to convoy operations, to attacks. It goes beyond lectures by providing actual practice at interacting with actual military units preparing to deploy. To quote one team leader, " Such training should be mandatory. No responsible military leader would send troops or officers into such situations without such training and neither should we."

¶7. (SBU) The sophistication of training offered at the Combat Training Centers (CTC) in Fort Irwin and Fort Polk makes it qualitatively superior to the training at Camp Atterbury. However, the CTC training is longer and requires trainees to be fit into a pre-existing schedule of brigade rotations.

¶8. The Embassy requests that NEA/I send as many PRT trainees as possible to the CTCs for field training, instead of limiting this opportunity to the PRT's leadership core. Camp Atterbury would remain the more flexible field training venue for the remainder unable to attend a CTC.

¶9. (SBU) CTC participation will cost approximately \$1154 per person. The Camp Atterbury course will cost \$805 per person. NEA/I has already budgeted for these costs. Emphasis should be on maximizing attendance at the CTCs, but those unable to attend a CTC rotation should go to Camp Atterbury. Post strongly encourages other agencies contributing personnel to PRTs to make the field training mandatory for their detailees. Other agencies will have to bear responsibility for scheduling and paying the attendance costs of their own personnel.

¶10. (SBU) The Administration has made clear that the PRT program remains one of its highest priorities for Iraq, and will continue through at least December 2011. It is important that we send well-prepared individuals into the field who are able to immediately deal with a lingering insurgency, political strife, and weak governance, while operating in thorough coordination with their military counterparts.

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